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Addendum

MAIN PROGRAMME RECORD

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. During the 1990s, most of the region successfully restored its macroeconomic balance and reduced inflation to manageable levels by implementing adjustment policies. Economic reforms resulted in the emergence of market economies open to international trade and capital flows. Economic growth between 1990 and 1994 averaged three to four per cent. Regional economic growth slowed to 0.6 per cent in 1995, in part owing to crises in Mexico and Argentina. Preliminary data indicate that the regional economy strengthened again in 1996, although the system remains fragile.

2. More than 130 presidential and parliamentary elections held in Latin America and the Caribbean between 1974 and 1993 characterize a major shift towards democratization. However, countries in the region still face severe problems of extreme poverty, poor governance structures and unsustainable use of natural resources, and these pose the major challenges for the decade ahead.

3. Four out of every 10 persons in the region are poor, and nearly 20 per cent of the population exists in absolute poverty. Social inequalities have increased sharply, and the status of women leaves much to be desired.

4. Poverty eradication and employment creation are major priorities for UNDP in the region, reflecting the goals established at the World Summit for Social Development. The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) is also responding to the recommendations of the Meeting of Ministers of Social Welfare of the Group of Rio, and of the Hemispheric Meeting on Poverty. One specific target is to promote actions that will directly or indirectly benefit at least half those living in poverty, in line with goals set at the Micro-credit Summit in Washington, D.C., in 1997.

5. UNDP's strategy in democratic governance focuses on consensus-building, institutional reform and capacity-building of institutions such as the judiciary, parliaments and political parties. It also supports processes of government decentralization aiming at an improved participation of civil society.

6. Current rates of deforestation and soil erosion, urban and water pollution, depletion of non-renewable resources, and loss of biodiversity all indicate that the region's current style of development is unsustainable. To help Governments meet these challenges, UNDP will continue to implement an extensive range of activities aimed at conserving and restoring the environment. The approach is a cross-sectoral one, involving those directly affected by environmental problems. The activities address concerns expressed by the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Central America and at the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The policies and priorities established by the Heads of State at the Hemispheric Summit on Sustainable Development held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in December 1996, constitute the future policy framework in this area.

II. OPERATIONALIZING SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING COUNTRY OFFICES AND HEADQUARTERS

7. RBLAC supports a number of projects designed to help countries develop national poverty eradication strategies. UNDP administers a poverty fund for Latin America and the Caribbean financing eight country programmes in follow-up activities to the Social Summit.

8. UNDP actively promotes decentralization and rural development. In the Central American countries a Trust Fund, financed by Italy and UNDP, supports a regional programme on sustainable human development. The programme draws upon the experience gathered through the implementation of the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America (PRODERE). In Nicaragua, a subprogramme benefits four departments characterized by extreme poverty and former conflict. It promotes community participation and the strengthening of local organizations. The participatory mechanisms include development committees at the municipal and departmental levels, local development agencies that promote employment, and health, education and environmental planning systems. In Guatemala, the anti-poverty subprogramme serves three departments affected by former conflict, contributing to the reintegration of uprooted populations. A $50 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) will enable local organizations to make investments. The Netherlands, Italy and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have joined in this effort.

9. In Haiti, support is provided to 15 municipalities to strengthen their planning and management capacity. UNDP also implements projects to foster rural economic development in regions most stricken by extreme poverty.

10. A $4.5 million project in Bolivia has helped 4,000 poor families in the Altiplano. The project provided technical assistance for improving the production of alpaca wool and establishing of a fibre processing unit to produce alpaca yarn for export and for sale to local spinning plants. In Ecuador, a $2 million project is improving living conditions in poor areas of Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca, benefiting lower-income women and children through community participation. In Guyana, another pilot project, "Squatter Settlements and Depressed Areas", works to improve living conditions within a national poverty eradication strategy to which UNDP has significantly contributed.

11. In Colombia, an $11.9 million programme funded by UNDP and the Government supports the national social plan based on a participatory model for public management. A Social Investment Fund helps create employment, improve the condition of women, and facilitates investments in local infrastructure serving the poorest 20 per cent of the population. In Peru, a $20.8 million UNDP programme supports government efforts to help those living in extreme poverty and coca farmers. The poor have benefited from the establishment of the Social Development Fund, while a crop substitution programme has promoted alternative development in three main coca-growing areas of Peru. Another $20.3 million programme provides assistance in the resettlement of internally displaced populations. In Paraguay UNDP, with the collaboration of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), contributed to a major

consensus-building process involving the participation of the highest levels of government, civil society, and the private sector. This led to the preparation of the Strategic Plan for Social Development, which was launched by the President in November 1996.

12. In Argentina, a $200 million programme on productive reconversion, "Proyecto Joven", had trained and imparted skills to 100,000 unemployed youths by the end of 1996. A second phase of the project is being negotiated.

13. A new regional project, "Effects of Macroeconomic and Social Policies and Distribution in Latin America", was launched in collaboration with IDB. It focuses on the effects of macroeconomic and social policies on poverty in 12 to 15 countries. A secondary theme is the effect of these policies on economic growth. The analysis is based on comparative country studies. A growth scenario is adopted as a background to discuss factors leading to poverty in each country, and to find ways to reduce their impact.

14. In Brazil, a $41 million project supports the Institutional Development of the Ministry of Health. To serve a wider clientele, particularly the poor, health services were decentralized to municipalities, resulting in a significant reduction of the infant mortality rate. A $21 million project, "Control of Endemic Diseases", significantly contributed to reducing mortality from a number of diseases such as malaria and Chagas disease.

15. The programme to control and prevent acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) sponsored by UNDP in Brazil is recognized as one of the most relevant initiatives in the worldwide fight against the pandemic. More than 220 projects have been executed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to raise awareness on this sensitive issue. About 40,000 professionals were trained, and 37 research projects have been launched. Four local ethics and human rights networks were established. Strong linkages were created among the Government, NGOs, the private sector and universities.

16. Several activities were undertaken in the region as follow-up to the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women. UNDP has assisted Governments in operationalizing their commitment to the advancement of women through a range of actions which include widespread dissemination of information on the Beijing Platform for Action and other material relating to gender awareness. UNDP has also been actively involved in efforts to integrate gender issues into national plans, in the development of statistics and indicators on women, and in legislative reform. NGOs and other groups have been actively incorporated into the post-Beijing process.

17. Most countries in the region have established national commissions on gender to monitor implementation of the Beijing recommendations. UNDP, along with other agencies, provides technical assistance to develop national policies on gender and establish national institutions that promote gender perspectives in public policies and government institutions. Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay have received UNDP assistance for the development of gender policies.

18. In Paraguay, UNDP has worked with the Secretariat for Women and women's groups in the follow-up to Beijing and produced a gender-specific national human development report. In Brazil, a project provides assistance for training of elected women leaders in municipal bodies.

19. A regional project, based in Costa Rica, disseminated information on the Beijing Conference and promoted gender awareness and consensus-building on gender issues with the participation of women's groups, government institutions and policy makers. A computerized information system was developed listing recommendations and commitments made at world, regional and national presidential summits and conferences that were related to gender issues.

20. UNDP also supports projects concerned with sectoral social policies and investments affecting women. For example, in Argentina the IDB-supported Maternal and Child Health Programme has achieved significant results. Two major hospitals and six health centres were rehabilitated. A health-care reform programme was undertaken in the provinces of Mendoza and Buenos Aires.

21. The UNDP regional environmental portfolio received significant support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 1996. Most prominent were those activities related to biodiversity conservation and management, climate change and international waters. During 1996, projects totalling approximately $24.5 million were approved. As some of these resources are assigned for project development and formulation, it is expected that they will add an additional $29.5 million to the current $100 million regional GEF portfolio.

22. In Guatemala, a $7.7 million GEF-financed project helps safeguard threatened ecosystems containing globally significant biodiversity in nine protected areas. UNDP is also assisting, through GEF, those countries that have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. A series of projects, known as "enabling activities", assist these countries to fulfil their primary commitments under both conventions. National inventories of greenhouse gas emission sources are being prepared and national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources are being formulated.

23. UNDP's portfolio includes five regional projects. They address sustainable use of resources in the Amazon, globally significant environmental concerns in Central America, energy efficiency and development of renewable energy resources, heavily contaminated bays and coastal zones in the Caribbean and monitoring of greenhouse-effect gases.

24. A new project to assess the feasibility of using sugar cane bagasse as fuel in biomass integrated gasification systems is among those approved in 1996. The purpose is to promote investments in a technology that promises to produce electrical energy efficiently, create more jobs in rural areas, and achieve zero net emissions of greenhouse gases.

25. Two new projects, now in the preparatory phase, will contribute to the establishment of a Central American system of protected areas and biological corridors, and of a Central American fund for environment and development. The estimated contribution of GEF will be around $25 million, and it is expected

that these funds will leverage at least three or four times that amount. The fund will finance innovative projects addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, ozone depletion and pollution of international marine, coastal and fluvial ecosystems. As a consequence of GEF approval, the Multilateral Investment Fund of IDB has agreed to provide approximately additional $25 million to fund a separate sustainable development account under the Central American fund.

26. During 1996, seven countries had Capacity 21 programmes under way. These programmes, along with a regional programme in the English-speaking Caribbean islands, had a combined cost of about $4.5 million. Bolivia and Costa Rica are decentralizing implementation of their national Agenda 21 activities, building on their earlier initiatives which are, together with the Chinese programme, considered to be "flagships" of the global Capacity 21 programme. In Bolivia, the Capacity 21 programme helped strengthen the newly created Ministry for Sustainable Development, through decentralization of its institutional structures and support for local participation in development planning. In Costa Rica, there are four main elements of the Capacity 21 programme. Costa Rica's national development plan was harmonized with Agenda 21, and a system of social, economic and environmental indicators and "green" accounting principles are being instituted. Education campaigns have increased national awareness. Clean production and green communities were promoted, a land-use planning system was developed, and mechanisms to implement international conventions were created. Other Capacity 21 programmes in the pipeline for 1997 include programmes for Colombia, Guatemala, Paraguay and Peru.

27. Significant activities are also being financed through government cost-sharing. In Brazil the amount reached $100 million, contributing to the maintenance of flexible and efficient mechanisms of the Pilot Programme to Conserve the Brazilian Rain Forest. Coastal management methodologies were applied in 17 States. Sustainable management plans were designed and fully implemented in six selected conservation units. Waste management models were formulated for application at the federal, state and municipal levels.

28. The region has made sweeping strides towards democratization. To consolidate these gains, both Governments and civil society organizations have expressed the need for international cooperation to improve national institutional structures and the relationships between government and civil society. Governance was selected as the main theme for the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State held in Santiago, Chile, in November 1996. The Government of Chile requested UNDP assistance in preparing the technical documentation for the Conference. Preparatory activities included the organization of national conferences in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Nicaragua, with the participation of government representatives and leaders of civil society in these countries as well as representatives of Central American countries, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

29. UNDP supports efforts of overall State reform. In Peru, $176 million has been allocated to improving key government institutions and creating new institutions to limit the role of the State and transfer productive assets to the private sector. The programme supports efforts to promote the private sector, revitalize the economy and prepare loan portfolios. It also seeks to promote investment and foster sound management practices.

30. The subprogramme on judicial reform promotes the independence, restructuring and decentralization of the judiciary. It also supports the strengthening of functions such as public defence, special proceedings for women and the young criminal, and training of judges, district attorneys and magistrates. In Central America, various projects are being financed through the UNDP-Spain Trust Fund on Governance. In Guatemala, together with the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Comprehensive Commitment on Human Rights, and in El Salvador, UNDP assists in the establishment of a public defence system, the overall r[illegible]m of the judiciary, the strengthening of the Office of the Counsel f[illegible] Human Rights and the civilian police. In Honduras, two projects aim at st[illegible]gthening the judiciary system and the civilian police, which will be transferred from military jurisdiction under the provisions of a constitutional amendment.

31. In Peru, a $115 million programme of judicial reform, involving loans by the World Bank and IDB, provides support to the Judiciary Branch and the Department of the Public Prosecutor. In Uruguay, judicial reform is proceeding on the basis of experience gathered through a UNDP/United States Agency for International Development (USAID) initiative implemented between 1993 and 1995. The new project has already reduced the workload of the Supreme Court, made progress in institutional development and introduced alternative methods of conflict resolution. Computerized information systems have been installed. Another project in Uruguay provides assistance to the Ombudsman's Office.

32. Another area of cooperation in democratic governance concerns the strengthening of parliaments and political parties. In the English-speaking Caribbean, UNDP contributed to the efforts by political leaders to launch the Association of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians, the purpose of which is to promote dialogue and exchange on relevant socio-economic and political issues in the subregion. In Uruguay, the programme of support to Congress stresses efficient methods of management, streamlining functions and responsibilities and establishing formal mechanisms to facilitate access to legislators. The overall aim is to improve the eroded image of the Parliament.

33. UNDP draws on its reputation as a neutral broker to help build consensus. It has promoted dialogue among opposing parties fostering agreements on political and developmental agendas. The role played by UNDP in the promotion of the consensus-process called "Bambito" allowed various political parties and social sectors in Panama to agree on a common national political and socio-economic agenda. During 1996, UNDP actively promoted dialogue and negotiations concerning the transition of the Panama Canal into Panamanian hands. At the end of 1999, the Canal Zone, which is valued at $20 billion and includes major industrial and military infrastructure, will be turned over to Panama after 97 years of United States administration. A meeting held under the auspices of UNDP brought together representatives from every segment of Panamanian society, including political parties, indigenous groups, the Church, business leaders, academia, labour organizations, women's groups and the media, who committed themselves to conducting the future administration of the Canal in the context of a transparent national agenda.

34. UNDP collaborates with many countries in the area of human rights. In Colombia, a project assists in strengthening the work of the Presidential

Counsellor for Human Rights to identify actions for the defence, promotion and protection of human rights, including education campaigns and development of a curriculum for primary education on this issue.

35. Another priority concerns decentralization and government administrative reform. A regional conference on political cooperation in this area was sponsored by UNDP in Caracas, involving the participation of mayors and provincial governors from around the region. It was followed by a series of seminars held in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Venezuela.

36. The programme of support for municipal development in Argentina achieved important results in institutional strengthening. It assisted in administrative reform and programme formulation in five provinces encompassing 150 municipalities. The programme is expected to cover a total of 24 provinces over a five-year period.

37. In Chile, the $7 million Programme of Support for Regional Decentralization (PADERE), financed by UNDP and the Chilean Government, concluded in 1996. Major achievements were the strengthening of the Ministry of Planning and 12 regional governments, including the government of the Santiago metropolitan area. The programme also supported the establishment of computerized information systems, studies and training of human resources.

38. In Colombia, UNDP is implementing the $6 million technical assistance component of a World Bank loan aimed at strengthening local public administration and geared to capacity-building in departments and municipalities. Several other UNDP projects assist in the improvement of local administrations both at the municipal level in Bogotá, Cali, Medellín and Cartagena and at provincial levels.

39. UNDP contributed to Venezuela's decentralization efforts through direct support for the modernization of six state governments, which has improved their capacities in the areas of planning, administration, human resources development and public finance. The cost of the projects is shared by the state governments, which also act as the executing agents. The successes registered have induced four additional states to request projects which will begin in 1997. UNDP also assisted the Government in the formulation of a project to support a comprehensive reform of the electoral process. UNDP will also be involved in the implementation of this key governance initiative, which will be financed with government cost-sharing.

40. UNDP has also supported the establishment of networks of individuals and institutions to foster exchange and dissemination of information. The Montevideo Network is a permanent body that includes high-level decision makers in Latin America. They exchange information to evaluate and define new development models and to discuss the orientation of processes of governmental reform. An Ibero-American network on governance is being established. It allows the participation of government officials, political leaders and members of academic institutions. The aim is to foster sub-networks on specific themes such as government decentralization, judicial reform and cooperation among political parties and parliaments.

41. UNDP also sponsored the diffusion of information on democratic governance. A survey on governance in Latin America was conducted, eliciting the views of presidents, ministers, intellectuals, clerics, entrepreneurs and military officers. Books were also published, including one called "Democracy, Market and Equity".

42. In Guyana, UNDP worked with the Government on the privatization of many state firms. The project, largely funded through IPF resources, supported the successful divestment of a number of state-owned enterprises.

III. NEW PROGRAMMING ARRANGEMENTS AND DELIVERY

43. RBLAC has a very well developed pipeline of new projects and programmes. Delivery for the 1992-1996 cycle is equal to around 92 per cent of the IPF for the region. When the successor programming arrangements introduced the concepts of "borrowing" and "advance programming", RBLAC was able to take full advantage of these approaches. In the cycle just completed, borrowing totalling $6,140,000 was approved and advance programming amounted to $14,636,000.

44. In addition, RBLAC has always viewed decentralization combined with empowerment and delegation as an effective and efficient modus operandi. The Bureau will be delegating full approval authority for programme budgets to the majority of the country offices, on the basis of detailed assessment of the country office in question and other relevant factors.

IV. ADVOCACY, BUILDING CONSTITUENCIES AND MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

45. RBLAC continued to advocate sustainable human development and other UNDP themes throughout the region. These activities are made possible by the long-standing good relationships that UNDP maintains with Governments. This relationship allows policy dialogue and debate on sensitive political issues such as political parties, corruption or public security. UNDP also maintains close relationships with an array of organizations in civil society, forging partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), churches, trade unions, peasant and women's organizations, indigenous people, academic institutions and human rights organizations. UNDP has also developed strong links with other United Nations agencies, the development banks and regional organizations.

46. The launching of the 1996 Human Development Report had significant impact in terms of the advocacy role it played in raising awareness at all levels of society about the challenges facing them.

47. Another important UNDP contribution is the preparation and publication of national human development reports. UNDP country offices in Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Venezuela published reports in 1995. The same task has been accomplished by the country offices of Costa Rica, Brazil and Chile in 1996, while Argentina, Belize, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago are now in the process of publication. The reports afford the Governments and the societies

the means to examine the process of development from the SHD perspective. They also facilitate debate about the countries' socio-economic conditions and the choice among programme alternatives. In Brazil, the national human development report was discussed in parliamentary sessions, and the country has decided to produce additional reports from individual states.

48. Work undertaken in relation to United Nations world conferences stimulated debate and action on specific themes. The post-Beijing activities provided an impetus to improve the role of women in society, and were capitalized on by UNDP offices. Ample participation was fostered in the region in relation to follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). In the areas of governance and environment, UNDP worked closely with the Ibero-American and hemispheric summits, respectively. In Haiti, the Resident Coordinator organized an inter-agency task force to prepare a resume of all the United Nations conference goals and commitments for distribution to government authorities and other interested parties. A series of workshops will be organized to discuss the follow-up to the conferences and the implications for Haiti.

49. Given the limited amount of core resources to which the region is entitled, RBLAC has continued its tradition of mobilizing additional external resources. UNDP is playing the role of a key partner in the development process of the region, and its strategy is linked to the provision of development services allowing UNDP to maintain its relevance to Governments' development programmes. The mobilization of resources continued its upward trend in 1996 with an increase of over 10 per cent from the 1995 figures. Total approved resources for the fifth cycle reached $3.25 billion, comprised of $3.035 million in non-core resources (94 per cent of the total) and $213 million in approved IPF resources (6 per cent of the total). The non-core segment is comprised of government cost-sharing resources, originating largely from loans from international financial institutions and the Governments' own resources. These funds have financed substantive programmes on UNDP priority themes. As a result of the large cost-sharing resource base, administrative costs are well below the 20 per cent target set for the region.

50. Cost-sharing is closely linked to national execution, which is prevalent in the region, accounting for approximately 90 per cent of entire programme resources. Country offices provided services in support of national execution.

V. STRENGTHENING UNDP PARTNERSHIPS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

51. UNDP has made considerable efforts to strengthen its collaboration and coordination with development partners. Regular consultations for coordination purposes are held with United Nations agencies, bilateral donors and representatives of civil society and NGOs. Particularly relevant was UNDP's cooperation with the international financial institutions in the area of governance, state modernization, poverty alleviation, environmental protection, policy formulation and increasing the absorptive capacity of many countries. As a result, UNDP has been associated with programmes of considerable magnitude,

representing more than 90 per cent of the resources for which UNDP is accountable. Significant results have been achieved in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama and Peru. Such collaboration was particularly relevant for countries in special development situations or post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Nicaragua.

52. UNDP has been active in Jamaica, together with other United Nations system agencies, in a broad-based consultation process, involving all regions and organizations of civil society, aimed at defining a national poverty strategy. The process was presided over by the Prime Minister, and the national poverty strategy was approved by the Jamaican Cabinet.

VI. UNDP PERFORMANCE IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS AND OTHER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

53. UNDP has extensive experience in countries undergoing the transition from conflict to development. UNDP's role in supporting United Nations mediation in Central America proved that it is a valuable partner of other donors, cooperating agencies and NGOs in furthering peace negotiations and accords, rebuilding war-torn societies and consolidating the peace process. UNDP drew upon its strengths as a politically neutral honest broker, its long-term presence through national country offices, its experienced staff, its knowledge of the evolving situation and its wide range of contacts with all actors. UNDP employs a multi-faceted approach that links emergency assistance, rehabilitation and long-term development.

54. During 1996, UNDP continued supporting regional activities to consolidate peace in Central America in the framework of the Alliance for Sustainable Development. The Programme provided technical assistance to the presidential summits on themes related to peace consolidation, and particularly supported the participation of a wide array of Central American civil society organizations. The $2 million project "Consolidation of Peace in Central America" promotes the participation of peasant organizations, trade unions, women's organizations, indigenous peoples, the private sector and political parties, facilitating debate on peace and SHD issues. Another project extends to the Central American subregion the experience from Costa Rica's "State of the Nation" project, which successfully fostered wide participation and debate on human development issues. It is expected that the preparation of subregional and national reports will involve the participation of an extensive network of Central American organizations in civil society, led by a consortium of universities and other academic institutions.

55. The Government of Spain and UNDP established a new trust fund for Central America with an initial contribution from Spain of $11 million. Under the agreement, the Government of Spain has pledged to sustain contributions over several years. The fund was inaugurated at a regional seminar held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, with the participation of Spanish cooperation authorities and the Director of RBLAC, presidents of supreme courts and ministers of justice of the Central American countries. The main theme of the seminar was judicial

reform and public security. These are two of the priorities the trust fund will address, along with government decentralization and fiscal reform.

56. At the national level, UNDP continued to create opportunities for dialogue between opposing parties. The consultation, dialogue and consensus-building mechanisms allowed representatives of various political parties and civil society organizations to discuss and reach agreement on fundamental issues among themselves and with the government. Important coordination mechanisms involved the participation of third countries which are "Friends" of the peace process. In Nicaragua, UNDP continued to act as Technical Secretariat of the Support Group consisting of Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. In El Salvador, UNDP was active in support of United Nations mediation in the Peace Agreement. In Guatemala, UNDP assisted the United Nations Moderator of the negotiations that finally led to the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace signed in Guatemala City on 29 December 1996.

57. The implementation of reconciliation and peace accords called for the preparation and implementation of specific projects. In Nicaragua, UNDP supported consensus-building activities during the last political campaign, particularly promoting discussion on an anti-poverty agenda. The implementation of the project on property issues, financed by $3.5 million provided by UNDP, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden, stimulated solutions to ownership claims on land. Other challenges are to resolve disputes over executive and legislative jurisdiction and to strengthen the judicial system by training judges and magistrates. To allow judicial decentralization, court houses must be constructed in outlying municipalities.

58. In El Salvador, UNDP continued to implement important projects related to the peace accords. An investment and technical cooperation portfolio was assembled to mobilize technical and financial resources. Other projects involved strengthening democratic institutions and the social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants and demobilized soldiers. In El Salvador, UNDP provided support to the Office of the National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights, the National Civilian Police and the Police Academy for public security and the restructuring of the electoral system. Several projects financed by the UNDP-Spain trust fund launched new phases of projects in judicial reform and public security.

59. In Guatemala, a trust fund was established with UNDP/Office for United Nations System Support resources as seed capital to support the implementation of the peace agreement. UNDP assisted the Government and former guerrilla forces in building an investment and technical cooperation portfolio that will be presented at a consultative meeting in Paris in 1997. In this context, UNDP works in close collaboration with development banks and bilateral donors. UNDP and the United Nations Mission collaborate in strengthening human rights institutions. A joint project financed by Spain and UNDP contributes to the restructuring of the judicial system, while technical assistance is provided to the civilian police and the Counsel for Human Rights. UNDP is one of the international organizations overseeing the reintegration of uprooted populations, for which a trust fund has been established.

60. In Haiti, the UNDP programme focuses on strengthening democracy and improving management of democratic institutions. A $16 million programme provides support to the National Truth and Justice Commission. It involves collaboration with the Office of the President, the Prime Minister and the Parliament. It also supports civic education and the electoral system and participates in the reform of the prison system. UNDP provides technical assistance to various governmental organizations to improve management of public services, involving work in the areas of macroeconomic fiscal and monetary policy and customs.

61. In the area of natural disasters, UNDP was involved in post-hurricane reconstruction in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. In both countries UNDP supported the Government, civil society and donors in identifying priority areas of intervention for the rehabilitation of the zones affected by Hurricane Cesar.

VII. BUILDING A LEANER AND MORE ACCOUNTABLE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

62. The demands for increased collaboration with Governments, partner agencies and civil society and the donor community placed considerable strain on the resources of tne offices in the region. This was compounded by the need to reduce administrative costs and by the reduced allocation of core resources to the region. To offset this trend, and still respond to the new demands generated, almost all offices have undergone a process of readjustment and restructuring. New functions have been added in order to improve the substantive/thematic response to projects and programmes co-sponsored with other agencies. The offices' operational capacities have been upgraded to increase effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness. Most remarkably, and thanks to the increase in extrabudgetary resources, these measures have been accomplished with a reduction of the core staff as well as of administrative costs charged to the central resources. Offices in the region have also started networking for the purpose of sharing best practices. Increasingly, other regions have also networked with Latin American offices for the same purpose.